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AUTHOR McCormick, Fred C.; McCormick, Eileen R.
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ABSTRACT

In 1984, the State Board of Education, Department of Adult, Vocational, and Technical Education (DAVTE), contracted with an outside evaluator to assess the impact of the Illinois Quality Assistance Plan (QAP). (The QAP is a state-funded program for locally initiated, developed, implemented, and evaluated projects that was begun in Fiscal Year 1982.) The assessment involved an in-depth study of the QAP projects funded in Fiscal Years 1982 and 1983. It included review of the applications and reports, a survey of participants and non-participants, on-site visitations, and follow-up interviews of those projects. The study found that the QAP affected both personnel and program development. Not surprisingly, of all possible QAP activities, attending workshops, visiting business and industry, and visiting exemplary programs had the greatest effect on teachers, while developing or updating curriculum had the greatest effect on students. Also, more impact resulted from QAP activities in those projects that participated in the QAP both years. Participants in QAP activities were enthusiastic about the opportunities that were provided and shared many examples of the tangible effects they had experienced. However, the study also identified problem areas that related to local education agencies, such as lack of knowledge of QAP, failure to disseminate QAP processes and products, and lack of self-evaluation activities in QAP projects. Recommendations were made for increasing teacher awareness of the QAP, involving educators in QAP needs assessment and operation, developing procedures for identifying high-priority needs for funding, sharing QAP products and processes, and designing evaluation activities. (KC)

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Final Report: A Third-Party Evaluation To Assess The Impact Of The Quality Assistance Plan

Illinois State Board of Education

Adult, Vocational and Technical Education

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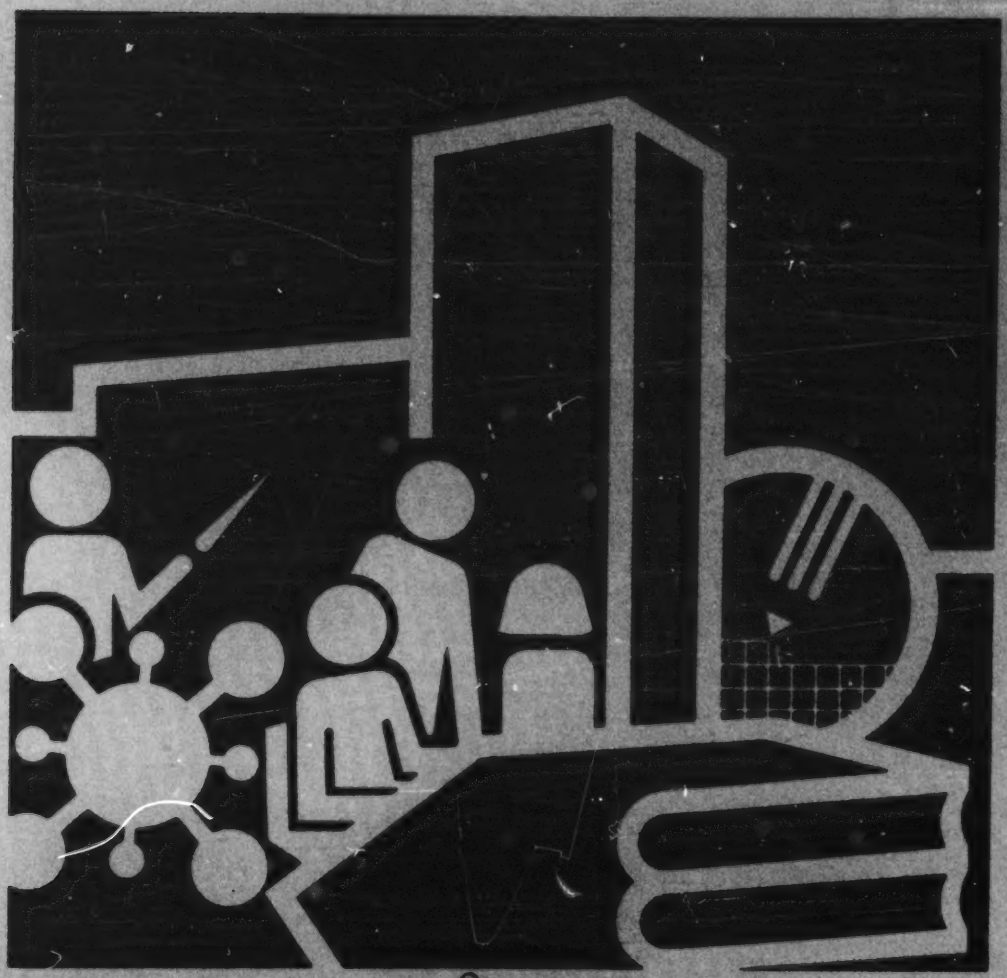

CE042429

Final Report: A Third-Party Evaluation To Assess The Impact Of The Quality Assistance Plan

Impact Assessment Team

Fred C. McCormick
Project Manager

Eileen R. McCormick
Project Associate

Educational Operations
Concepts, Inc.

Sponsored by

Illinois State Board of Education

Walter W. Naumer, Jr.
Chairman

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State Superintendent
of Education

Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education

Research and Development Section

June, 1985

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4. BODY OF THE REPORT

In Fiscal Year 1982, staff of the Illinois State Board of Education/Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education initiated the Quality Assistance Plan (QAP) to provide financial and technical assistance to local education agencies for vocational education program and staff development. The Quality Assistance Plan had two major objectives:

1) Program Development, emphasizing improvement of local vocational education programs and services; and

2) Personnel Development, emphasizing improvement of vocational education staff competencies.

Currently, the Quality Assistance Plan is described as "a state funded program for:

- locally initiated,
- locally developed,
- locally implemented,

  and
- locally evaluated projects.

Its purpose is to build the capacity, in each educational setting, for the improvement of vocational education programs, such that each student will be assured of readiness for either immediate employment or continued education in preparation for later employment."

In its first four years of existence, the QAP provided mini-grants to some 769 projects or an average of 192 projects per year. Grant sizes ranged from $850 to $10,000, depending upon the vocational reimbursement amount of the applicant institution. Applicants have included secondary schools, secondary area vocational centers, community colleges, and state agencies.

During Fiscal Year 1983, it was determined that one of the Fiscal Year 1984 Research Projects was to be the conduct of a third-party evaluation to assess

the impact of the Quality Assistance Plan. A Request for Proposal (RFP) to conduct the evaluation was announced on April 1, 1983, with a two-fold purpose:

1) to determine short-term impact by assessing Quality Assistance Plan projects funded in Fiscal Year 1983; and

2) to initiate a plan for long-term impact assessment of the Quality Assistance Plan, as a state program, to improve future efforts.

In July, 1983, Educational Operations Concepts, Inc. (EOC) was awarded a Funding Agreement to conduct the impact assessment project, as an independent evaluator. In July, 1984, a continuation Funding Agreement was approved in order to continue to assess impact of the Quality Assistance Plan, and to provide technical assistance during Fiscal Year 1985, based on the results of the Fiscal Year 1984 impact assessment project.

Historically, Illinois State leadership in Vocational Education has placed great emphasis on impact assessment as it relates to research and development activities. The Request for Program Improvement Proposals in Vocational Education in 1980 defined impact as "a specific measurable change or effect." Proposers in that year were requested to discuss intended impact in terms of target populations, quantitative and qualitative effects, time-frames, means of achieving impact(s) and methods of evaluating or measuring the impact(s). Discussion of dissemination and utilization strategies were also required as a major component of the impact statement. In 1982, the University of Illinois, Department of Vocational and Technical Education, in conjunction with the Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education, State Board of Education developed a resource titled Assessing the Impact of Vocational Education Research and Development on Vocational Education Programs (Project IMPACT). This document defined impact as: *the consequence(s) of funded vocational education research and development projects and programs.* Furthermore, impact was discussed and classified in terms of source, time, intent, relationship to goals, and its positive or negative nature.

The Fiscal Year 1984 Request for Proposal relating to the impact assessment of the Quality Assistance Plan noted that "applicants are required to use the processes suggested in this document (i.e., of Project IMPACT) to determine the short-term and long-term impact assessment of the Quality Assistance Plans." The Project IMPACT resource was accordingly utilized in the development of a conceptual framework for this impact assessment project.

This Final Report has been prepared as one of two final products associated with A Third-Party Evaluation to Assess the Impact of the Quality Assistance Plan: Continuation. A second final product, entitled The Quality Assistance Plan for Vocational Education in Illinois provides an overview of all aspects of the Quality Assistance Plan relating to the assessment and technical assistance project activities during Fiscal Years 1984 and 1985.

This section of the Final Report includes nine sub-sections which discuss the major components associated with the performance of a Third-Party Evaluation to Assess the Impact of the Quality Assistance Plan: Continuation. A final sub-section provides major conclusions and recommendations of the impact assessment and technical assistance project.

a. Final Report Abstract

The Final Report Abstract follows on the next page.

b. Expenditure of Funds

Actual expenditures were claimed according to the Illinois State Board of Education/Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education Funding Agreement.

c. Paid Participants in Activity

. Fred C. McCormick, Ph.D., President
Educational Operations Concepts, Inc.
1773 Skillman West
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55113
(Project Manager)

and

Final Report Abstract

Official Project Title: A Third-Party Evaluation to Assess the Impact of the Quality Assistance Plan: Continuation

Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education Funding Agreement Number: R-31-25-X-0334/0341-496

Project Director: Fred C. McCormick, Ph.D., President

Funded Agency: Educational Operations Concepts, Inc.

Location of Funded Agency: 1773 Skillman West, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55113

Time Period Covered: July 1, 1984 - June 30, 1985

Major Accomplishments of the Project: The Project accomplished its three (3) objectives, resulting in the following: 1) Orientation Conferences; 2) Completion of Impact Assessments; 3) Review of Project IMPACT Document; 4) QAP Forms Analysis; 5) Completion of Composite Descriptive Profiles; 6) Technical Assistance: FY 84 Outcomes/Program Objectives; 7) Technical Assistance: QAP Application/Reporting Guidelines; 8) Technical Assistance: Overall Planning, Management and Evaluation and Dissemination of QAP (State-Level) Program; 9) Development of Model QAP Plans/Reports; 10) Selection of QAP Writers for Technical Assistance; 11) Technical Assistance at DAVTE regional meetings, upon request; 12) Progress Reports; 13) Documentation of Impact Assessments; 14) Documentation of Revisions: Project IMPACT Document; 15) Documentation of Outcomes: State-Level Technical Assistance; 16) Documentation of Outcomes: Technical Assistance to QAP Writers; 17) Documentation of QAP Assessment/Procedures for Total System; 18) Final Report Draft; 19) Draft of Unique Final Product; and 20) Final Report/Unique Final Product Delivery.

Potential Impact on Vocational Education:

Results of this comprehensive third-party independent evaluation and technical assistance activity will provide for future Illinois approaches in program/personnel development for program improvement through the Quality Assistance Plan, and its assessment of impact. Improved teaching techniques in a substantial number of learning situations within five years after the activity will result. Primary target populations expected to be impacted include students, teachers and counselors, administrators and supervisors, and other community resource persons.

Products Delivered (Indicate titles, types, quantity, recipients and date of delivery)

The following products are associated with this Third-Party Evaluation Project (being delivered as outlined in the Final Report):

- Progress Report, September 30, 1984 (Two copies);
- Progress Report, December 31, 1984 (Two copies);
- Progress Report, March 31, 1985 (Two copies);
- Final Report, June 30, 1985 (Twenty copies)
- Product: The Quality Assistance Plan for Vocational Education in Illinois, June 30, 1985 (Twenty copies).

In addition, 1500 copies of the (printed) project product, The Quality Assistance Plan for Vocational Education in Illinois . . . The First Four Years were delivered during December, 1984.

. Eileen R. McCormick, M.S.
Corporate Officer and Consultant
Educational Operations Concepts, Inc.
1773 Skillman West
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55113
(Project Associate)

d. Resource Listing

A resource listing associated with this impact assessment and technical assistance project might include listings of both materials and human resources.

(1) Material Resources

The sole major material resource utilized in the performance of this impact assessment and technical assistance project has been the document, Assessing the Impact of Vocational Education Research and Development on Vocational Education Programs (Project IMPACT), a Fiscal Year 1982 development of the University of Illinois, Department of Vocational and Technical Education, in conjunction with the Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education, Illinois State Board of Education. No material resources or instructional materials needed to be purchased for tne performance of this impact assessment and technical assistance activity.

(2) Human Resources

A number of different persons and/or organizations have been documented as being instrumental during all phases of this activity. These include the Contract Administrator and all other members of the Research and Development Section, Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education. The support of the Assistant Superintendent, Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education, as well as personnel in the Compliance Reports, Program Approval and Evaluation and Consultant Services Sections is also acknowledged, gratefully. A total of ninety-five (95) vocational teachers, in thirty local education agencies, responded to the Quality Assistance Plan (QAP) Impact Survey. A total of eight technical assistance sessions were conducted under

the aegis of the project, involving 188 local and regional plan writers, as well as State Board and University personnel.

e. Major Accomplishments and Significant Findings of the Project

Five areas of major accomplishment and significant findings are discussed in this sub-section.

(1) Approved Project Goals and Objectives

The activity goal of the project, as stated in the Funding Agreement, was to conduct a third-party evaluation to assess the impact of the Quality Assistance Plan as a Continuation Project, providing both impact assessment and technical assistance. The Fiscal Year 1984 Third-Party Evaluation resulted in the determination of short-term impact of the QAP projects funded in Fiscal Year 1983, and the initiation of a plan for the long-term project and program impact assessment of the QAP involving those QAP projects funded in Fiscal Year 1982. In addition, the Third-Party Evaluation reported on the positive and negative aspects of the Impact Assessment Design of Project IMPACT, in terms of its (piloted) utilization in assessing the impact of the QAP. Thus, positive and negative characteristics of both the QAP process and the Impact Assessment Design were documented in Fiscal Year 1984. Based upon the two-fold purpose and the minimum requirements provided by the RFP, and Fiscal Year 1984 evaluation findings/recommendations, the following project objectives for the Fiscal Year 1985 continuation evaluation project were proposed:

. OBJECTIVE 1: Complete (Long-Term) Quality Assistance Plan (QAP) Project/Program Impact Assessments;

. OBJECTIVE 2: Provide, on an ongoing basis, State-Level (RDS/DAVTE/ISBE) Technical Assistance for the Quality Assistance Plan; and

. OBJECTIVE 3: Provide, on an ongoing basis, Technical Assistance to Quality Assistance Plan Writers.

All deliverables of final products were related directly to the activity goal and the three (3) activity objectives stated above. The procedures which were used in accomplishing the activity goal and the three activity objectives numbered twenty (20).

(2) Product Abstract

A Product Abstract follows on the next two pages.

(3) Major Dissemination Activities Summary

Major dissemination activities related to this impact assessment and technical assistance project will continue to occur during Fiscal Year 1986. Specific dissemination methods follow:

A. The impact assessment and technical assistance project team could be available to provide technical assistance during Fiscal Year 1986 to both the State Leadership and to local Quality Assistance Plan Writers on a selected basis, as has been provided during Fiscal Year 1985.

B. Copies of the Final Report and the other final product will be given to the Illinois State Board of Education, Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education, to be disseminated to a target audience.

B. Based on information provided in the course of impact assessment and technical assistance activities, the most cogent lines of dissemination will be accomplished by dissemination of project documents as follows:

. The Final Report (Twenty copies) and the final product, The Quality Assistance Plan for Vocational Education in Illinois (Twenty copies):

- Illinois State Board of Education and Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education (10 copies);
- ERIC/NCRVE (2 copies);
- NNCCVTE (4 copies);
- Illinois State Library System (2 copies);
- The Illinois Council on Vocational Education (ICOVE) (2 copies).

Technical assistance to plan writers was provided by means of seven (7)

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Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education
Research and Development Section

Product Abstract

1. Title of material: The Quality Assistance Plan for Vocational Education in Illinois

2. Date material was completed: June 30, 1985

3. Please check one: New material: X Revised material: ____ Field-tested material: ____

4. Originating agency: Educational Operations Concepts, Inc.

   Address: 1773 Skillman West, Saint Paul, Minnesota Zip Code: 55113

5. Name(s) of developer(s): Fred C. McCormick, Ph.D., and Eileen R. McCormick, M.S.

   Address: 1773 Skillman West, Saint Paul, Minnesota Zip Code: 55113

6. Developed pursuant to Contract Number: R-31-25-X-0334/0341-496

7. Subject Matter (Check only one according to Department of Education Code):

   Code

   ____ 01 Agricultural Education
   ____ 03 Business and Office Education
   ____ 04 Distributive Education
   ____ 07 Health Occupations Education
   ____ 09 Home Economics Education
   ____ 10 Industrial Arts Education
   ____ 16 Technical Education
   ____ 17 Trade and Industrial Education
   ____ 22 Cooperative Education
   ____ Career Education
   X Other (Specify): All of Above

8. Education Level:

   ____ Pre-K Thru 6 X 7-8 X 9-10 X 11-12
   X Post-Secondary X Adult X Teacher (Pre-service)
   X Administrator (Pre-Service) ____ Other (Specify): ____

9. Intended for Use By:

   ____ Student X Classroom Teacher X Local Administrator
   X Teacher Educator X Guidance Staff X State Personnel
   ____ Other (Specify): ____

10. Student Type:

    ____ Regular ____ Disadvantaged ____ Handicapped
    ____ Limited-English Proficiency X Other (Specify): All of Above

11. Medium and Format of Materials

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Photos: Yes ____	No ____		
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14 What level(s) of assistance is required to provide implementation of this outcome?

X awareness X understanding
X deciding X implementing

15 Are Consultive/Inservice (or staff development) available? Yes X No _____

Contact Illinois State Board of Education
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Research and Development Section, E-426
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL 62777
(217) 782-4620

16 General Description (State the general objective and suggested method of use. Summarize the content and tell how it is organized. Write the description so that it can be used to promote the material. Continue on back of this sheet or on another sheet if necessary)

(Please see reverse side.)

17 Person Completing this Abstract Fred C. McCormick, Ph.D., President

Full Address

Educational Operations Concepts, Inc.

1773 Skillman West

Saint Paul, Minnesota Zip 55113

(612) 633-1103

(OVER)

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16. The general objective of this document is to provide an overview of the processes and products associated with The Third-Party Evaluation to Assess the Impact of the Quality Assistance Plan: Continuation. Included are discussions of the impact assessment and technical assistance activities associated with the two-year project during Fiscal Years 1984 and 1985. Included are six major sections, as follows:

. Executive Summary

. Product Abstract

1. Introduction: The Quality Assistance Plan and Impact Assessment Design

2. Quality Assistance Plan (QAP) Project/Program Impact Assessments

3. State-Level Technical Assistance for the Quality Assistance Plan

4. Technical Assistance for Quality Assistance Plan Writers

5. Major Conclusions and Recommendations

6. Exhibits

   . A. Final Report Abstract

   . B. ERIC Documentation Letter

   . C. (Continuation) Proposal Abstract

   . D. Request for Information

   . E. A Composite Review of the Quality Assistance Plans Funded in Fiscal Years 1982, 1983 and 1984

   . F. Quality Assistance Plan (QAP) Impact Survey Results (Composite of QAP Plan Writers)

   . G. Quality Assistance Plan (QAP) Impact Survey Package

   . H. Quality Assistance Plan Impact Survey Results (Vocational Teachers)

   . I. QAP Impact Assessment Recommendations for Immediate Attention

   . J. The Quality Assistance Plan for Vocational Education in Illinois - - - The First Four Years

   . K. Quality Assistance Plan Funding Levels: Fiscal Years 1982-86

   . L. Quality Assistance Plan for Vocational Education, 1985-86

   . M. Memorandum on Processing the QAP

   . N. Illinois Vocational Educators Workshop: Agenda and Material

   . O. Memorandum to Regional Vocational Administrators: Vocational Educators Workshops

workshops or briefing sessions, during the period January-June, 1985, with a total of 188 persons participating. Workshop materials disseminated are discussed in the second final product, The Quality Assistance Plan for Vocational Education in Illinois.

. NOTE: In addition, a brief project product was disseminated widely after development early in Fiscal Year 1985 as a part of the continuation project. Designed as a QAP impact assessment summary, it is titled, The Quality Assistance Plan for Vocational Education in Illinois - - - The First Four Years. A total of 1,500 pieces were printed and were disseminated widely, both within Illinois and beyond, according to a dissemination plan developed with and reported to, the Project's Contract Administrator. This project product may be found following sub-section i. of this Final Report.

(4) Staff Development

Staff Development for the Impact Assessment and Technical Assistance Team Members occurred both as a result of interaction among Project Team members and with other state-level, regional and local personnel in educational agencies. Members of the Project Team could be available to provide technical assistance and information based upon project findings, conclusions and recommendations during Fiscal Year 1986.

(5) Publicity

Major publicity efforts were related to the dissemination of the unique project product, The Quality Assistance Plan for Vocational Education in Illinois - - - The First Four Years. Publication and/or presentations have been proposed with the Illinois Vocational Association, with the Editor of the Illinois Vocational Education Journal, and with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career and Vocational Education. The Fiscal Year 1984 Final Product, Quality Assistance Plan Impact (Fiscal Years 1982-83) was submitted by the Research and Development Section for inclusion in the ERIC microfiche collection. It was selected for inclusion in this collection and appeared in the May, 1985 issue of Resources in Education. Awareness regarding assessment and technical assistance activities was heightened, as evidenced in responses from at least 95 vocational teachers in 30 local education agencies and in participation by 188 local and regional plan writers, as well as State Board and university personnel within Illinois.

f. Problems

No major problems have been encountered in the performance of this comprehensive impact assessment and technical assistance activity. The project has been demanding in terms of on-site travel, data collection, time commitment and report production. The excellent cooperation and assistance afforded the Project Team by the Contract Administrator, Research and Development Section, Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education, was the key to the elimination of any potential problems inherent in this type of time-and-energy-consuming activity.

g. Summations of Evaluation Data Collected

All summations of impact assessment and technical assistance data collected in the performance of this impact assessment project have been reported in the project product, titled The Quality Assistance Plan for Vocational Education in Illinois.

h. Statement of Impact

Impact, defined as "the consequence(s) or effect(s) of funded vocational education research and development projects or programs", has been an important consideration to the Project Team in the performance of this comprehensive project. The discussion of the Statement of Impact, which follows, was subject to continuous revision, as necessary and appropriate, during the performance of this activity. Specifically, the Statement of Impact was to be revised, as appropriate, and reported as an update by way of the three Progress Reports (September and December, 1984 and March, 1985) and in the Final Report. As stated in the three previous Progress Reports, no major revisions in the Statement of Impact have been indicated during the course of the project activities.

The populations to be impacted by this activity include all who participate in the Illinois vocational education process both as providers and users. However,

some populations may be impacted more by the intended consequences of the project goals than others. The following statements discuss the intended impact on four different populations.

. Students of teachers providing improved vocational programs (secondary, post-secondary and adult), will be impacted by potential changes in specific skills, knowledge, attitudes, interests, values and perceptions in their present/future jobs and everyday lives. This may represent both a short and long-range impact.

. Teachers and counselors will be impacted by heightened awareness and greater opportunities in vocational education program/personnel development for program improvement, in assisting students to prepare for the world of work. This should constitute both a short and long-term impact.

. Administrators and supervisors (statewide, regionally and locally) will be impacted by the activity's bringing to their attention the need for program/personnel development, relating to present as well as new/emerging occupations. How well this activity helps administrators and supervisors will be evaluated by the proportions of students/teachers who realize the impacts stated above.

. Other community resource persons and opinion/decision makers (including legislators, employers, business/labor/industry, and members of statewide advisory groups, e.g., ICOVE) may be impacted by recognizing that students, teachers, administrators/supervisors are being impacted, as suggested above, and therefore, by being willing to support program/personnel development for program improvement. This can be accomplished by involving these persons in project planning, procedures and reporting, and in disseminating to them the project reports and unique products.

The program levels impacted include secondary and post-secondary, with some effects to be realized in general education at the secondary and post-secondary levels. Types of institutions include comprehensive high schools, area vocational

centers, community colleges, universities and state agencies.

Results of the project will have significant impact on vocational education programs, activities, individuals, the economy and societal concerns. Project achievements will result in improved techniques/materials in a substantial number of learning situations within five years, by impacting upon program and personnel development in four functional areas of vocational education within Illinois. In addition, the study has served to document implications for future activities/policies/planning at the state level. Technical assistance, in Fiscal Year 1985, based on the outcomes of the Fiscal Year 1984 Project, offered at both the state and local levels, has been instrumental in insuring both short and long-term impacts.

i. Conclusions and Recommendations

Major conclusions and recommendations are based upon the comprehensive impact assessment and technical assistance project findings, discussed in detail and summarized fully in the product, The Quality Assistance Plan for Vocational Education in Illinois. Conclusions and recommendations are presented according to the three areas of project objectives and the (fourth) area of impact assessment design:

- Impact Assessment Design (in Quality Assistance Plan Assessment Activities): State-Level;
- Quality Assistance Plan (QAP): Project/Program Impact Assessments;
- Quality Assistance Plan (QAP): State-Level Technical Assistance; and
- Quality Assistance Plan (QAP): Technical Assistance to Plan Writers.

The Quality Assistance Plan for Vocational Education in Illinois continues as a vehicle for program improvement and for the implementation of the regional education for employment program. The Quality Assistance Plan (QAP) should supplement, but not supplant, ongoing vocational education funding. It should be based on a needs assessment involving all vocational staff members

(and particularly teachers). The highest priority problem(s) must be addressed, and the QAP needs to be designed as a project with an anticipated effect or impact.

The following definition of impact in vocational education provides background concepts for the Illinois vocational education leadership at the state, regional and local levels, in considering the major impact assessment and technical assistance conclusions and recommendations, which follow.

> *Impact in vocational education may be defined as "the consequence(s) or effect(s) of funded vocational education research and development projects and programs".*

Impact Assessment Design (in Quality Assistance Plan Assessment Activities): State-Level:

Conclusions	Recommendations
1. The Impact Assessment Design of Project IMPACT provides excellent rationales for the establishment of Program goals.	1. Continue to develop long-term Program goals for the Quality Assistance Plan.
2. Project IMPACT has developed a comprehensive definition and complete classifications of impact in Illinois Vocational Education.	2. Continue to adopt the comprehensive definition and classification structure for all RDS/DAVTE/ISBE purposes, including the Quality Assistance Plan. Incorporate the word "effect(s)" in the definition of impact as follows: "the consequence(s) or effect(s) of funded vocational education research and development projects and programs".
3. The development of "long-term/short-term" impact delineations by Project IMPACT are useful to the researcher and for research design, but are not easily used with Quality Assistance Plan practitioners in data collection activities.	3. Adopt "long-term/short-term" impact delineations for research design purposes only.
4. Project IMPACT has recommended that project impact be assessed on a short-term basis only.	4. Assess Quality Assistance Plan projects on a short-term basis only.
5. Project IMPACT has recommended that program impact be assessed on a long-term basis only (utilizing an in-depth selection of a small group of projects).	5. Assess the Quality Assistance Plan as a state-level program on a long-term basis only (having clearly identified state-level goals and objectives for the Quality Assistance Plan).
6. Project IMPACT provides a <u>design</u> but cannot be considered a "how to" resource.	6. Take the next step(s) to expand the Impact Assessment Design as a "how to" resource (e.g., by identifying measures of change in populations and processes).
7. The Impact Assessment Design is qualitative rather than quantitative in approach.	7. Continue to gather information on methodologies that lead to the assessment of impact on a quantitative basis, and work to synthesize qualitative and quantitative methodologies into a research and development impact assessment resource.

. Quality Assistance Plan (QAP): Project/Program Impact Assessments:

Conclusions	Recommendations
8. The Quality Assistance Plan for Vocational Education in Illinois is an initiative associated with impact for students and staff as perceived by vocational plan writers and vocational instructors.	8. Continue the Quality Assistance Plan as a statewide initiative, emphasizing actions which contribute toward its impact for students and staff.
9. Quality Assistance Plan writers value the QAP because it addresses local needs and actions, because it provides for local flexibility, and because it provides encouragement to local staff. They wish to see maximum impact for the dollars available. Involvement of teachers and counselors in all phases of the QAP process is the major initiative in maximizing QAP impact. This is particularly important with respect to regional QAPs, with the inherent concern that teachers can be even further removed from the QAP process, with resulting losses in participation and impact.	9. Continue the Quality Assistance Plan as a state funded program of locally initiated, developed, implemented, and evaluated projects, the purpose of which is to build the capacity, in each educational setting, for the improvement of vocational education programs, such that each student will be assured of readiness for either immediate employment or continued education in preparation for later employment. Initiate conscious efforts, both formally and informally, to involve teachers and counselors in the QAP process, particularly in regional QAPs.
10. Vocational plan writers and vocational instructors agree in their perceptions regarding QAP activities, the impacts of those activities, and the methods used to select the activities. Vocational plan writers perceive QAP activities to be more fully evaluated than do vocational instructors.	10. Continue to develop strategies that encourage vocational plan writers and vocational staff members to work cooperatively in all phases of the Quality Assistance Plan. Encourage vocational plan writers to emphasize the evaluation of QAP activities with vocational instructors.
11. Some vocational plan writers and vocational instructors are either not aware of the Quality Assistance Plan or have chosen not to participate in it.	11. Continue to develop strategies to increase awareness and understanding of the Quality Assistance Plan and its potentials for impact among vocational plan writers and vocational staff members.

. Quality Assistance Plan (QAP): State-Level Technical Assistance:

12. Good progress has been realized in improving the QAP application/reporting procedures, including the sharpening of QAP purpose/objectives, instructions for determining highest priority needs, evaluation for effectiveness, and the offering of technical assistance to QAP plan writers.	12. Continue to improve and sharpen QAP application/reporting procedures according to QAP program-level goals and objectives.

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. Quality Assistance Plan (QAP): State-Level Technical Assistance: (continued)

Conclusions	Recommendations
13. More closely-linked efforts between the Research and Development Contract Administrators and the Regional Vocational Administrators, in the review and processing of QAP applications, as well as in providing technical assistance, have been developing.	13. Reinforce closely-linked efforts between the Research and Development Contract Administrators and the Regional Vocational Administrators in the review and processing of QAP applications and technical assistance to QAP plan writers. Involve Consultant Services personnel to a greater extent in the QAP program, particularly in providing technical assistance to QAP plan writers. Consider a QAP inservice session on application, reporting and technical assistance efforts for these three sections of the State Board (DAVTE).
14. Efforts have been initiated in developing QAP management information and processing procedures so that Research and Development Contract Administrators and other State Board personnel might have a maximum of time beyond "paper handling" to provide technical assistance and perform site visitations.	14. Continue to develop QAP management information and processing procedures in order to provide more opportunities for technical assistance to QAP plan writers as well as opportunities for State Board personnel to make QAP site visitations to confirm impact on site as a result of funding QAP projects.
15. There continues to be some lack of awareness of the existence of the QAP among some local education agencies, and among teachers within some Illinois local education agencies.	15. Encourage, through the University Council for Vocational Education in Illinois and the Illinois Vocational Association, teacher education initiatives (both pre-service and in-service) to include QAP topics such as awareness, needs assessment, writing and evaluation. Stress teacher involvement in the QAP, particularly in Regional Quality Assistance Plans.
16. The percentages of deobligated QAP funding through Fiscal Years 1982-84 have remained relatively constant, indicating the need for better QAP application planning.	16. Take steps which will minimize the percentage of deobligated QAP funds annually, by encouraging well-planned QAP applications.
17. The Quality Assistance Plan, as a State Board (DAVTE) program initiative was designed to provide resources to supplement but not supplant Illinois vocational education funding.	17. Continue to "keep sights raised" stressing quality with local and regional QAP plan writers, to "keep the Q in the QAP", thus ensuring that QAP funding supplements, but does not supplant, Illinois vocational education funding.

. Quality Assistance Plan (QAP): Technical Assistance for Plan Writers:

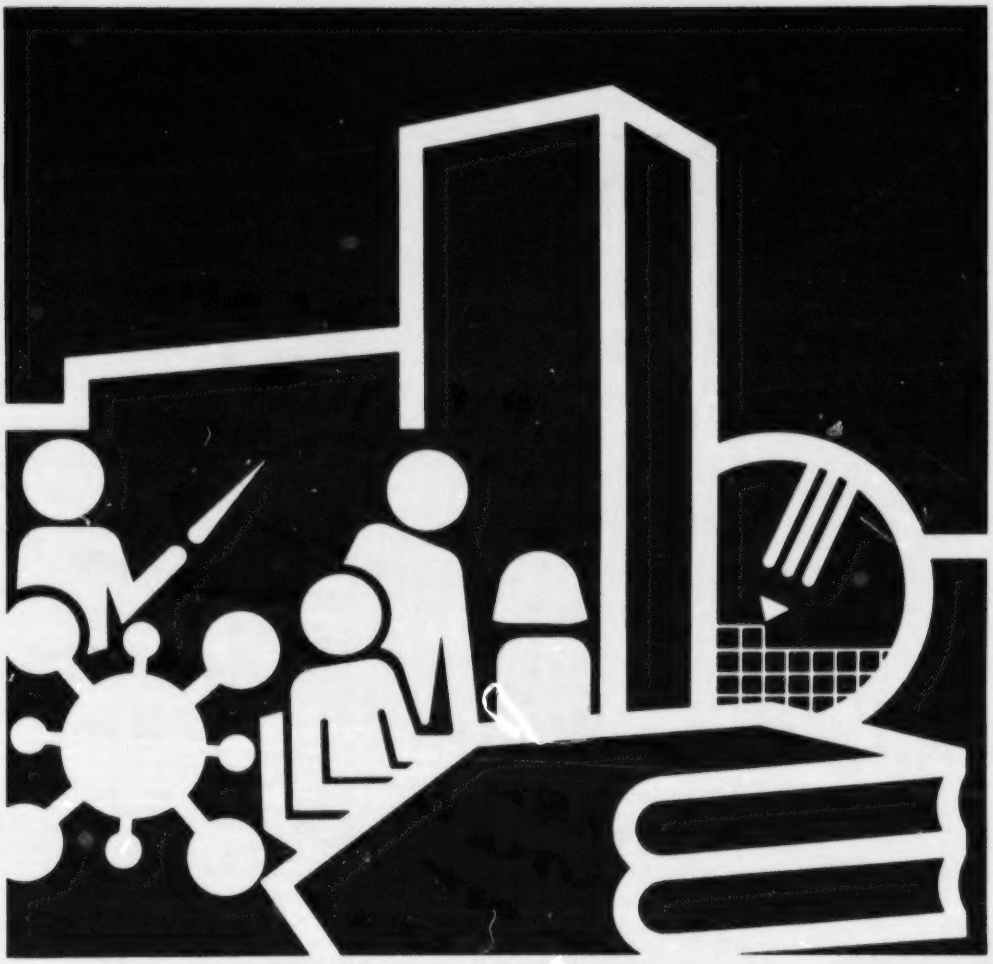
Conclusions	Recommendations
18. The Continuation Project has only been able to "scratch the surface" in initiating technical assistance for QAP plan writers, both in providing inservice sessions and in more specific, individualized approaches. The State Board (DAVTE) Region in Suburban Cook and Lake Counties has developed a model which could be useful to the other regions throughout Illinois.	18. Continue the development of inservicing and other more specific individualized approaches, in providing technical assistance for QAP plan writers, following the model which has been developed in Suburban Cook and Lake Counties. Major emphases in providing technical assistance should include: . Needs assessment to determine highest priority and longitudinal needs, including consideration of individual staff development plans; . Involvement of <u>all</u> appropriate staff in Quality Assistance Plan need assessment, planning, application and evaluation activities; . The design of QAP projects, based upon defined problems with measureable objectives, associated with locally-designed/directed evaluation for effectiveness, meaningful at the local level, and accountable to the state agency as funding source; and . "Hands on" items relating to QAP application, operation and evaluation/reporting which can be taken back and utilized on-site.
19. The December 13, 1984 adoption by the Illinois State Board of Education of "A Policy and Plan for Education for Employment" and the future directions for establishing a regional education for employment program are now reflected in "The State Plan for Revitalizing Vocational Education in Illinois, Fiscal Years 1986-1988". The QAP continues as a vehicle for program improvement and for the regional education for employment program in Illinois. Phase I Planning Grant Proposals are in the process of being submitted and funded (through July, 1986).	19. Include the (Regional) Education for Employment planning grantees among those Illinois vocational educators requiring QAP inservice and other technical assistance during the Phase I planning grant period (through July, 1986).

The Quality Assistance Plan For Vocational Education In Illinois...

The First Four Years

Illinois State Board of Education

Adult, Vocational and Technical Education



Fall, 1984

The Quality Assistance Plan For Vocational Education in Illinois — The First Four Years

What is the Quality Assistance Plan?

The Quality Assistance Plan (QAP) is a state-funded program for locally initiated, developed, implemented and evaluated projects that was begun in Fiscal Year 1982. Its purpose is to build the capacity, in each educational setting, for the improvement of vocational education programs. That improvement should be such that each student will be assured of readiness for either immediate employment or continued education in preparation for later employment.

In its four years of existence, the QAP has provided mini-grants to some 769 projects or an average of 192 projects per year. Grant sizes have ranged from $850 to $10,000, depending upon the vocational reimbursement amount of the applicant institution. Applicants have included secondary schools, secondary area vocational centers, community colleges, and state agencies.

What has the Quality Assistance Plan accomplished?

In 1984 the State Board of Education, Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education (DAVTE) contracted with an outside evaluator (Educational Operations Concepts, Inc. of Saint Paul, Minnesota) to assess the QAP's impact or effect. The assessment involved an in-depth study of the QAP projects funded in Fiscal Years 1982 and 1983. It included review of the applications and reports, a survey of participants and non-participants, on-site visitations and follow-up interviews of those projects.

The study found that the QAP had effects regarding both personnel and program development. Not surprisingly, of all possible QAP activities, attending workshops, visiting business and industry, and visiting exemplary programs had the greatest effect on teachers, while developing or updating curriculm had the greatest effect on students. Also, more impact or effect resulted from QAP activities in those projects that participated in the QAP both years as compared to those that participated only one year.

Participants in QAP activities were enthusiastic about the opportunities that were provided and shared many examples of the tangible effects they had experienced. Some examples were: a school newsletter that was developed "from scratch"; a staff that is now trained in the use of a self-evaluation instrument; two levels of typing instruction that have been revised based upon a new typing system; a completed student advisement handbook; a rearranged media center in keeping with competency-based instruction; newly developed competency-based education (CBE) materials for special needs students; teachers who have been inserviced in the use of computers; and courses that have been revised to incorporate computer-assisted instruction.

The Quality Assistance Plan (QAP) is a state-funded program for locally initiated, developed, implemented and evaluated projects. Its purpose is to build the capacity for the improvement of vocational education programs.

Attending workshops, visiting business and industry, and visiting exemplary programs had the greatest effect on teachers, while developing or updating curriculum had the greatest effect on students.

How can the impact of the Quality Assistance Plan be increased?

Overall the study found many positive changes resulting from QAP funding. According to those who had participated in QAP projects the benefits often greatly exceeded the dollars involved. However, the study also identified four problem areas that related to local education agencies:

- Some local plan writers are not aware of the existence of the QAP;
- Within local education agencies, many teachers have little or no knowledge regarding the QAP;
- Innovative QAP processes and products often are not shared with other education agencies; and
- QAP projects often lack sound self-evaluation activities.

In order to correct these problems the following recommendations were made:

1. Increase teacher awareness of the QAP and its potential for program and personnel development, while maintaining teacher-centered QAP activities;

2. Involve teachers and other education agency staff in QAP needs assessment, planning, operation, and evaluation. Needs assessment might be accomplished by means of annual individual staff development plans;

3. Develop procedures such that the highest priority need can be identified for QAP funding;

4. Share, when possible, QAP project activities with non-vocational education programs and teachers;

5. Share QAP products and processes in local, regional, and state-wide meetings, conferences, and publications;

6. Identify and recognize exemplary QAP projects;

7. Design and direct evaluations of QAP activities which are meaningful at the local level; and

8. Evaluate QAP activities for both efficiency and effectiveness. (Were they completed and were they worthwhile?)

In addition to these recommendations made for local educators, nineteen recommendations were made regarding state-level responsibilities toward the QAP. Briefly, the evaluators recommended that the Quality Assistance Plan be continued along with its current philosophy of recognizing local needs; that a computerized QAP management information system be developed as well as a directory of QAP projects; that every effort be made to make Illinois educators, and particularly teachers, aware of the QAP; and that assistance be provided to applicants in all areas of application and reporting, especially in the area of evaluation planning.

Finally, some suggestions will be included in the Fisca Year 1986 QAP application and reporting package. They include ways in which help may be sought in completing current year QAP reports as well as in making plans for next year's QAP. These suggestions are based upon information gained in the impact assessment and can lead to increased impact for the Quality Assistance Plan in the future.

More impact resulted from QAP activities in those projects that participated in the QAP both years.

Overall the study found many positive changes resulting from QAP funding.

Illinois
State Board of
Education

100 North First Street
Springfield, Illinois 62777

Walter W. Naumer Jr., Chairman
Illinois State Board of Education

Donald G. Gill
State Superintendent of Education

A Third-Party Evaluation to Assess the Impact of the Quality Assistance Plan: Continuation (R-31-25-X-0334/0341-496) was developed pursuant to a funding agreement with the Illinois State Board of Education/Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education/Research and Development Section, 100 North First Street, Springfield, Illinois 62777. Opinions expressed in this Final Product do not reflect, nor should they be construed as policy or opinions of the Illinois State Board of Education or its staff.

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